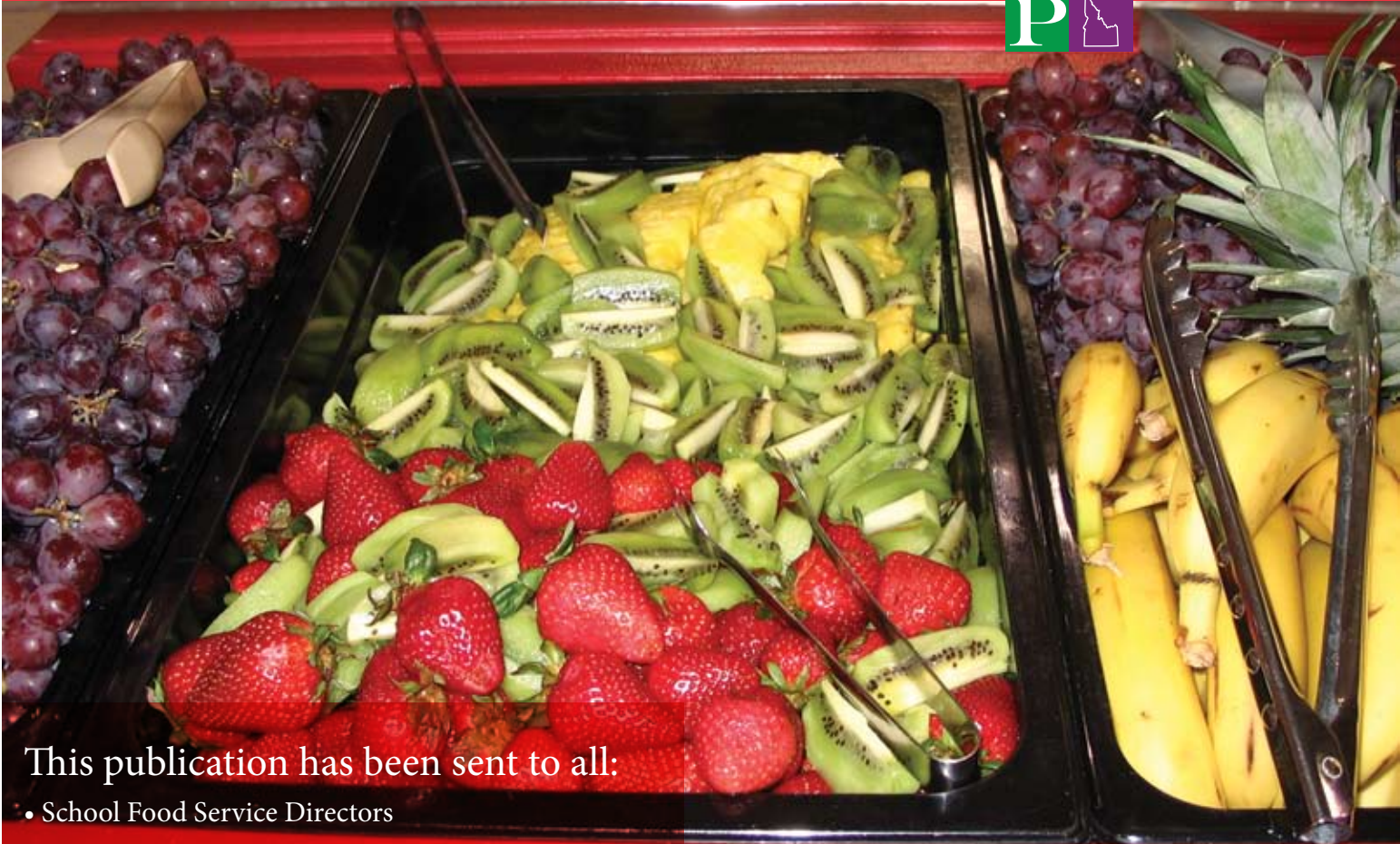


Nourishing News



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

OCTOBER 2008



This publication has been sent to all:

- School Food Service Directors
- School Food Service Kitchen Managers

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

OCTOBER

- Focus on the Customer
- NSLP Financial Management
- Serving It Safe
- Starting Right with Breakfast

Various locations statewide, please see our Web site for locations.



NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH
WEEK OCTOBER 13-17

To sign up for these trainings or more information visit our training web site: www.databasesdoneright.com/nutrition/

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- CIRCULATE TO: ☐ Superintendent ☐ Principal
☐ School Nurse ☐ Health Teacher ☐ Kitchen Staff

Offer versus Serve Rules

NSMP Breakfast

- Breakfast must include milk and two other menu items so it contains a minimum of three items.
- Double portions of the same menu item cannot be counted as two menu items.
- Breakfast does not have an entrée.
- Only one item can be declined.
- Students must select at least two menu items.
- If more than three menu items are offered, a student may decline only one item.



NSMP Lunch

- Minimum of three menu items must be offered: entrée, one side dish, and milk.
- If three menu items are offered, a student may decline one item.
- If more than three menu items are offered, a student may decline no more than two.
- The entrée must be selected.
- Double portions of the same menu item cannot count as two menu items.
- Offer versus Serve is required at the secondary/high school level.
- Offer versus Serve is optional at the elementary/jr. high/middle school level.



A Message from the Director

The focus of this month's newsletter is Offer versus Serve (OVS), and how to administer this part of the program and the benefits of implementing this process.

The two big goals of OVS are: (1) to reduce food waste in the school meal programs, and (2) to permit students to select the foods they prefer. Offer versus Serve is an option within the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, which allows students to choose less than all of the food items in a meal pattern. Under the Offer versus Serve provision, in Enhanced Food-Based menu Planning, students may decline up to two of the five required food items offered in the reimbursable lunch, and one of the four required food items offered in the reimbursable breakfast. High schools must provide the Offer versus Serve method to their students.

By offering food choices, students are more likely to eat the food items selected rather than throw them away. As a result, Offer versus Serve can save school districts money through avoided purchasing and disposal costs.



Benefits of OVS include, but are not limited to:

- Reduces plate waste, thereby reducing disposal costs
- Increases student satisfaction
- More students may purchase lunches resulting in increased revenue for the school
- Increases the consumption of fruits and vegetables because children get to choose what they like
- Fewer students may bring their lunch, which can result in less packaging waste

After implementing Offer versus Serve, cafeteria food waste from three pilot schools in Portland was reduced by as much as 36 percent. That's 1.5 tons per year that is no longer thrown away! Additionally, these schools realized significant savings in the average cost per meal--fourteen cents! In a school program of 500 children, that is \$70 a day or about \$1,400 per month!

(Reference: David Allaway, Project Manager for Harding Lawson Associates, "Offer Versus Serve and Food Choices in Elementary School Cafeterias; Waste Prevention Pilot Projects at North Plains Elementary School," Charles F. Tigard Elementary School, Metzger Elementary School." Flyer May 1994, p. 6.)

Sincerely,

Colleen Fillmore, PhD, RD, LD
CNP Director

Offer versus Serve Best Practices

Lynda Westphal, BS, Coordinator

Offer versus Serve is a tool to help you control food costs by eliminating food waste. Eliminating food waste during this time of higher food costs can be beneficial to your bottom line!

Offer versus Serve allows students to decline some of the food offered in school lunch or breakfast and applies to all menu-planning approaches. The food choice is strictly a student's decision and must be respected. If a student does NOT want milk, they do not have to take the milk, but students must take the full serving of a selected food to be able to count toward the requirement. For example, a student cannot take one potato wedge if the serving size is four wedges and have it count toward the reimbursable meal selection.

Offer versus Serve must be implemented in high school, but the district officials may choose whether they want to implement it in the lower grades.

Know your menu-planning method. Your menu-planning method dictates the rules you must follow on Offer versus Serve. There are different rules for Food-Based and Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) methods. If your neighboring school district is NSMP and you are Food-Based, any helpful hints they give you may not be applicable to your district.

Remember, the Offer versus Serve manuals that were sent to each district have three different modules depending on the menu-planning approach the district

has chosen. Pull out the module for the menu-planning method that applies to your district for activities you can use to assist your staff in understanding the regulations. It is best to train the staff and students early in the year on what a reimbursable meal is. Teaching the students can be very valuable. It can be as simple as using visual aids on the line with a list of each item with a reminder under each on how many components they must select.

For example:

ITEM 1
Chicken Patty
Reminder – Must select 4 items

To ensure a reimbursable meal, look at the set-up of your cafeteria. If you have a fruit and vegetable bar that students go to after the meal has been counted, the student must leave the line with a reimbursable meal. You could have a fruit basket at the end of the regular line and ask that the student take a piece of fruit to make their meal complete, or you could move the cashier to the end of the fruit and vegetable bar to ensure that each child receives a reimbursable meal. Would it be possible to move the fruit and vegetable bar to the beginning of the line?

These are all questions you need to ask yourself to be in compliance with the Offer versus Serve regulations. If you have any questions, please call the State Department of Education.

Definition of an Entrée: Where to start in Offer versus Serve

Anna Mae Florence RD, LD, Coordinator

Ever since the menu planning methods changed 13 years ago, there has been much confusion regarding Offer versus Serve. This article contains the information necessary to set up good procedures for Offer versus Serve in the Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) method.

First, lunches must offer a minimum of three menu items plus any additional menu items needed to meet the nutrient standards when averaged over the school week. Those three menu items must consist of an entrée, a side dish and milk.

Second, entrées need to be defined by the menu planner because all reimbursable meals must include an entrée. The USDA has an explanation for what an entrée is: *The entrée, as the central focus of the meal, should contribute substantial nutrients toward meeting the nutrient requirements.* In NSMP the student is required to take the entrée so the menu planner, in setting up what the entrée is, has the opportunity to structure menus so that students will be inclined to select more fruits and vegetables.

For example, a hamburger on a bun as the entrée could require that lettuce, tomato slices, and an onion

slice be served with every entrée. This means that every reimbursable meal will contain the lettuce, tomato and onion because it is part of that day's entrée definition. The menu planner will want to balance cost issues with nutrient concerns to come up with the best definition for each entrée.

Another area that needs to be focused on is Theme Bars. Remember that in NSMP the menu planner needs to establish a minimum portion size for any item that is self-serve. If the theme bar is a self-serve salad bar, how much does the student need to take in order to determine that an entrée has been served? Or how much does the student need to take in order to say that a side dish has been served? The serving could be a half-cup, one cup, one and half cups, etc. Again, the menu planner needs to balance cost with meeting the nutrient standards.

Lastly, and perhaps the most difficult part of all, is to communicate to the staff and to the students what constitutes an entrée. Being consistent assists everyone involved. If a one-cup portion is decided upon by the menu planner, it would be best practice to always make the self-serve entrée equal one cup. The student can confidently self-serve the entrée or side, and the staff can assure themselves that they are accurately identifying a reimbursable meal.



Resource Review: Offer versus Serve

Heidi Martin, RD, LD, Coordinator

Do you have the Offer versus Serve resources sitting on your shelf somewhere? You can't miss it—it comes in a large green box. This kit can do more than take up space on a bookshelf. It contains training packets for Traditional Food-Based, Enhanced Food-Based and Nutrient Standard Menu Planning. It also contains a resource pack with a reference guide, a CD of print materials, and a film overview of each menu-planning option in VHS and DVD formats.

Offer versus Serve seems to be one of the most confusing areas of Child Nutrition Programs. All kitchen staff need to have a thorough understanding of the Offer versus Serve program. This is a great resource to use to train your staff on Offer versus Serve. Not only does this resource include presentation slides, but it also includes activity sheets, quizzes and case studies to use as handouts in staff trainings.

This resource was sent to all school districts from the USDA's Team Nutrition Program. If you do not have the resources, you can order it for free at <http://tn.ntis.gov/>.

Is your program struggling with the ever increasing cost of food and paper supplies this year?

Mary Jo Marshall, BS, Coordinator

Participating in Offer versus Serve at all grade levels can have a positive financial impact on your program. It may require some changes in "the way we always did it" and student awareness and education to be effective.

Are you concerned and dismayed at the amount of food that is being wasted in your lunchroom? Under the Offer versus Serve option, when a student is allowed to decline items that they do not plan to eat, less food makes its way to the trash can.

It is our goal to provide healthy nutritious meals to students each day. We have observed you all in action to fulfill this goal and applaud your efforts; however, a healthy meal is only nutritious if it is consumed. When food service automatically serves all of the food items available at each meal to each child, waste is certain to be the result. Students know what they prefer to eat and are willing and able to consume. They are familiar with having choices in all aspects of their lives and expect to be able to make choices in the cafeteria so it is an easy sell to the students.

Consider the following example as a possible way to combat the financial impact of higher food costs in your program.

If a food item such as an 8 oz carton of milk, ½ cup serving of fruit or vegetable, or dessert item costs \$.25 and 20 students per day at each site decline the item under OVS, the savings for one school year would be \$850.00 per site.

What could you do in your program with food cost savings similar to the above example?

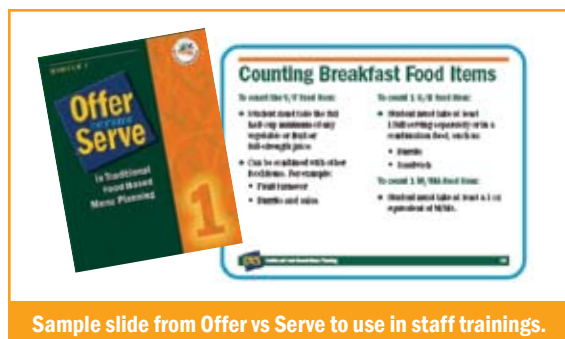
Offer versus Serve Rules

Food-Based Breakfast

- Four food components
Meat/Meat Alternate
Juice/Fruit/Vegetable
Grains/Breads
Milk
- All four food components must be offered.
- Serving size must equal the minimum quantities required for the age or grade group.
- Students have the option of which component to decline, including the milk.
- Students must take three full servings of the four food components.
- Students may take a smaller portion of the declined food component.

Food-Based Lunch

- Five Food Components
Meat/Meat Alternate
Milk
Grains/Breads
Two different servings of:
Vegetables/Fruits
- All five food components must be offered.
- Serving size must equal the minimum quantities required for the age or grade group.
- Students have the option of which component to decline.
- Students must take a full portion of at least three of the five food components. However, a local district (SFA) has the right to decide whether students below the senior high school level must take a minimum of 3 or 4 of the 5 food components offered.
- Students may decline any food component, including the entrée or milk.
- Students may take smaller portions of the declined food components.



Offer versus Serve Mini Posters

Heidi Martin, RD, LD, Coordinator

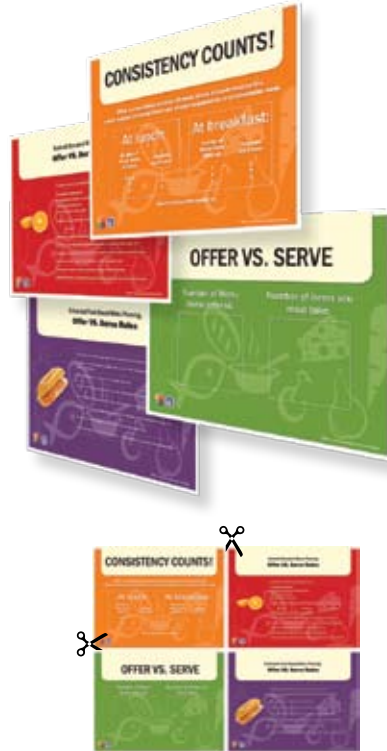
Four mini-posters are provided on the back of this month's newsletter. These posters are designed to help provide clarification on Offer versus Serve (OVS) to your staff and meal participants.

The Food-Based Menu Planning Rules Poster and NSMP Rules Poster are designed to help remind your kitchen employees of the OVS rules. Hang the poster that corresponds to your site's meal planning method in a location where your staff can frequently see and read the rules. The various rules on these posters can be used as discussion topics at staff meetings. OVS can be confusing at times, and it is important to discuss these topics with your employees in more detail.

The Consistency Counts Poster is designed to help remind you and your kitchen employees of the required number of components for each meal. This should be hung in a location where all of your serving staff can read it, especially the person in charge of checking for a reimbursable meal.

The OVS Student Poster can be used at the beginning of each serving line to communicate to your students the number of components they must take in order to have a reimbursable meal. This poster is made so you can change the numbers on it as needed for each meal. You may laminate

the poster and use dry erase markers on it, make numbers that you can tape on and remove, or make copies of the poster with different numbers written on each one.



Idaho State Department of Education

Tom Luna

Superintendent of Public Instruction

650 W. State St.

P.O. Box 83720

Boise, ID 83720-0027

208-332-6800

Toll Free: 800-432-4601

For more information contact:

Anna Mae Florence RD LD at 208-332-6829

-or-

Heidi Martin RD LD at 208-332-6827

or visit www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp

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